

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
 SS-15 USIA-06 /058 W
 -----071105Z 071526 /15

P R 062100Z MAY 77
FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7689
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAO PAULO 1161

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BR
SUBJ: SAO PAULO STUDENT PROTESTS

REF: SAO PAULO 0809

1. SUMMARY: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SAO PAULO HAVE STAGED THEIR SECOND OFF-CAMPUS DEMONSTRATION IN LITTLE MORE THAN A MONTH, THIS TIME TO PROTEST LAST WEEK'S ARRESTS OF NINE STUDENTS AND WORKERS ACCUSED OF PASSING OUT SUBVERSIVE LITERATURE. SYMPATHY DEMONSTRATIONS WERE CONDUCTED BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SEVERAL OTHER CITIES IN THE STATE. ESTIMATES OF TOTAL NUMBER OF PROTESTING STUDENTS IN THE STATE VARIED FROM 11,000 TO 15,000. SAO PAULO'S PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLY MORE ARTFULNESS IN DEALING WITH THE STUDENTS THIS TIME, SUCCESSFULLY PREVENTING A SUBSEQUENT MARCH WITHOUT RESORTING TO CLOSING OFF MUCH OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA. NONETHELESS, THE LATEST ROUND OF STUDENT PROTESTS SEEMS TO INDICATE A MORE SOPHISTICATED SYSTEM OF COORDINATION BETWEEN VARIOUS SCHOOLS, THE INCREASED PARTICIPATION OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT MOVEMENTS AND A WILLINGNESS TO ATTACK HERETOFORE AVOIDED PURELY POLITICALLY THEMES. STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE PROTESTS WILL PROBABLY ENCOURAGE ADDITIONAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

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END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO VARYING PRESS ESTIMATES, BETWEEN 6,000 AND 8,000 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED IN FRONT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAO PAULO LAWSCHOOL DOWNTOWN MAY 5 FOR THE RELEASE OF NINE "STUDENTS AND WORKERS" WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED LAST WEEK FOR DISTRIBUTING SUBVERSIVE LITERATURE NEAR FACTORIES IN SAO PAULO'S INDUSTRIAL

SUBURBS. IN AN OPEN LETTER WHICH THEY READ ALOUD, THE STUDENTS CALLED FOR AN END TO ARRESTS, TORTURE AND POLITICAL PERSECUTION, BROAD AMNESTY FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND EXILES AND THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES. ECONOMIC THEMES WERE ALSO SOUNDED. SIMULTANEOUS DEMONSTRATIONS WITH SIMILAR THEMES WERE STAGED BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN CAMPINAS, RIBERAO PRETO AND SAO CARLOS, ALL IN SAO PAULO STATE.

3. FOLLOWING THEIR INITIAL CONCENTRATION, THE STUDENTS ATTEMPTED TO MARCH FROM THE USP LAW SCHOOL TO A LARGE PLAZA ABOUT A MILE DISTANT. ABOUT TWO THIRDS OF THE WAY TO THEIR OBJECTIVE, THEY WERE BARRED BY A RELATIVELY SMALL NUMBER OF PLAIN CLOTHESMEN AIDED BY A JUDICIOUS USE OF TEAR GAS. AFTER A SHORT SITDOWN DEMONSTRATION, WHICH TRANSPIRED WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT, THE STUDENTS RETURNED TO THE USP LAW SCHOOL AND DISPERSED.

4. BY ALL ACCOUNTS THE PUBLIC SECURITY AUTHORITIES, REPORTEDLY ACTING UNDER THE STRONG MODERATING INFLUENCE OF GOVERNOR PAULO EGYDIO MARTINS AND SECOND ARMY COMMANDER GEN DILERMANDO GOMES MONTEIRO, ACQUITTED THEMSELVES WITH RESTRAINT. IN CONTRAST TO THEIR CLUMSY AND MUCH CRITICIZED PERFORMANCE DURING A USP STUDENT DEMONSTRATION AGAINST UNIVERSITY BUDGET CUTS MARCH 30 (REFTEL), SECURITY FORCES MADE NO EFFORT TO IMPEDE THE STUDENTS FROM HOLDING THEIR RALLY IN FRONT OF THE USP LAW SCHOOL. UNIFORMED POLICE WERE KEPT AT A DISCREET DISTANCE IN ORDER NOT TO PROVOKE THE SITUATION UNDULY, AND NO ARRESTS WERE MADE. ONLY WHEN THE STUDENTS DEFIED THE STATE SECURITY SECRETARY'S PROHIBITION AGAINST MARCHES ON CITY STREETS DID PLAIN CLOTHESMEN STEP IN TO BLOCK THEM. EVEN THEN, THE POLICE SUCCESS-
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FULLY AVOIDED ANY CLOSE JOWL PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE STUDENTS THAT COULD HAVE LED TO VIOLENCE.

5. WHILE THE PRESS WAS GENERALLY LAUDATORY OF THE POLICE BEHAVIOR, SOME HARDLINE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE SECURITY FORCES FEEL THAT THE SOFTLINE TACTICS APPLIED WILL ONLY ENCOURAGE THE STUDENTS TO ESCALATE THEIR PROTEST. THE CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE OF THE SAO PAULO STATE MILITARY POLICE TOLD CONSULAR OFFICERS THAT THE MAY 5 DEMONSTRATION WAS A PCB DIRECTED TRIAL RUN THAT, IN HIS PERSONAL OPINION, SHOULD HAVE BEEN MET WITH MASS ARRESTS. HE ALLEGED THAT THE NINE SOCALLED STUDENTS AND WORKERS WHOSE RELEASE FROM JAIL OSTENSIBLY WAS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS WERE IN FACT PAID PCB ORGANIZERS ASSIGNED TO INFILTRATE THE LABOR MOVEMENT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAO PAULO 1161

6. REGARDLESS OF THEIR ORIGIN, YESTERDAY'S PROTEST SEEM TO POINT OUT SEVERAL IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE NATURE AND DIRECTION OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN SAO PAULO STATE, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH ARE THE INCREASED DEGREE OF COORDINATION BETWEEN STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS ON DIFFERENT COMPUSES IN SUPPORT OF A COMMON THEME, AND A NEW WILLINGNESS TO ADDRESS PURELY POLITICAL ISSUES. THE SAO PAULO CITY DEMONSTRATION, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS ORGANIZED BY THE OFFICIALLY UNRECOGNIZED FREE CENTRAL STUDENT DIRECTORATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAO PAULO (USP) AND CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY (PCU). IT HAS BEEN YEARS SINCE THE STUDENT GROUPS FROM SEPARATE UNIVERSITIES HAVE PLANNED AND STAGED A COMMUN DEMONSTRATION. WHILE NO FORMAL INTER-UNIVERSITY STUDENT ORGANIZATION HAS TAKEN THE PLACE OF THE BANNED NATIONAL AND STATE STUDENT UNIONS (UNE AND UEE), THERE DOES APPEAR TO BE AN ATTEMPT TO FOUND AN ORGANIZATION WITH SOME OF THE SAME COORDINATING ATTRIBUTES.

7. ANOTHER NOTEWORTHY CHANGE IS THAT SOME PRIVATE UNIVERSITY STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS ARE WILLING TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN MORE PURELY POLITICAL PROTESTS. FORMERLY, SUCH PROTESTS, EVEN IN THEIR RELATIVELY MILD BRAZILIAN VARIETY, WERE ALMOST THE EXCLUSIVE PROVINCE OF THE FEDERAL AND STATE RUN UNIVERSITIES.
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FINALLY, UNIVERSITY STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS NOW APPEAR MORE WILLING TO DEFY GOVERNMENT PROHIBITIONS AGAINST STAGING RALLIES OFF-CAMPUS. THE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS APPEAR TO BE SATISFIED WITH THEIR LATEST EFFORT WHICH PROBABLY WILL ENCOURAGE ADDITIONAL PROTESTS IN

THE NEAR FUTURE.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 SAO PAULO 809
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2614712
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAO PAULO STUDENT PROTESTS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, BR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6fb50799-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009